Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application. The claims find full support in the specification and/or claims as filed.

Listing of Claims:

1.--20. (**Cancelled**)

21. (**New**) A computer implemented method for dynamically optimizing a buyer/seller relationship for a web marketing site, the method comprising:

(1) predicting that a buyer/seller relationship is degrading; wherein the predicting that a buyer/seller relationship is degrading comprises one of:

(a) determining if a customer is defunct; or

(b) determining if a customer is likely to leave the web marketing site before being served; and

(2) taking measures to prevent degradation of the relationship; wherein taking measures to prevent degradation of the relationship comprises one of:

(a) offering a dynamically optimized promotion to a customer; or

(b) offering favored treatment to a current customer at the web marketing site.

22. (**New**) The method according to claim 21, wherein the determining if a customer is likely to leave the marketing web site before being served step further comprises:

estimating an impatience of a customer; and

estimating the expected profit from said customer as a service time for said customer increases.

23. (**New**) The method according to claim 21, wherein the determining if a customer is likely to leave the marketing web site before being served step further comprises:

estimating an expected service time necessary to serve a particular impatient customer;

estimating if the particular impatient customer will leave the web marketing site before being served; and

wherein the particular impatient customer is offered the favored treatment if it is determined that the particular impatient customer will leave the web marketing site before being served.

24. (**New**) The method according to claim 23, wherein the favored treatment comprises a discount on a product.

25. **(New)** The method according to claim 21, wherein:

(a) the determining if a customer is defunct step further comprises:

specifying a permissible defunct threshold at a manager console; and

determining a probability that a customer will become defunct; and

(b) the offering a dynamically optimized promotion to a customer further comprises:

determining a dynamically optimized promotion, wherein the dynamically optimized promotion is determined by sampling via a sampling engine;

the sampling comprising:

determining a size of a sample, the sample comprising defunct customers, wherein a customer is defunct if the probability that the customer will become defunct is greater than the permissible defunct threshold;

offering different promotions to the defunct customers; and

determining the dynamically optimized promotion based on responses to the different promotions offered to the defunct customers;

wherein the dynamically optimized promotion is propagated to the web marketing site.

26. **(New)** The method according to claim 25, wherein the sampling is run either monthly, weekly, daily, hourly, or continuously.

27. **(New)** The method according to claim 25, wherein the sampling is run continuously and wherein the dynamically optimized promotion is automatically propagated to the web marketing site.

28. **(New)** The method according to claim 25, wherein the permissible defunct threshold is set according to an inter-login time of a customer at the web marketing site.

29. **(New)** The method according to claim 25, wherein the dynamically optimized promotion comprises a discount on a product that maximizes customer retention.

30. **(New)** The method according to claim 25, wherein the different promotions comprise different amounts of discount on products.

31. **(New)** The method according to claim 25, wherein the dynamically optimized promotion comprises a discount on a product that maximizes profit.

32. **(New)** The method according to claim 25, wherein the permissible defunct threshold is set lower for important customers.

33. **(New)** The method according to claim 25, wherein the sampling further comprises:

segmenting the defunct customers into socioeconomic groups; and

only sampling customers belonging to certain socioeconomic groups.

34. **(New)** A program storage device readable by machine, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by the machine to perform method steps for dynamically optimizing a buyer/seller relationship for a web marketing site, the method steps comprising:

(1) predicting that a buyer/seller relationship is degrading; wherein the predicting that a buyer/seller relationship is degrading comprises one of:

(a) determining if a customer is defunct; or

(b) determining if a customer is likely to leave the web marketing site before being served; and

(2) taking measures to prevent degradation of the relationship; wherein taking measures to prevent degradation of the relationship comprises one of:

(c) offering a dynamically optimized promotion to a customer; or

(d) offering favored treatment to a current customer at the web marketing site.

35. **(New)** The program storage device according to claim 34, wherein:

(a) the determining if a customer is defunct step further comprises:

specifying a permissible defunct threshold at a manager console; and

determining a probability that a customer will become defunct; and

(b) the offering a dynamically optimized promotion to a customer further comprises:

determining a dynamically optimized promotion, wherein the dynamically optimized promotion is determined by sampling via a sampling engine;

the sampling comprising:

determining a size of a sample, the sample comprising defunct customers, wherein a customer is defunct if the probability that the customer will become defunct is greater than the permissible defunct threshold;

offering different promotions to the defunct customers; and

determining the dynamically optimized promotion based on responses to the different promotions offered to the defunct customers;

wherein the dynamically optimized promotion is propagated to the web marketing site.

36. **(New)** The program storage device according to claim 35, wherein the sampling is run continuously.

37. **(New)** A computer implemented method of dynamically optimizing customer retention for a web marketing site, comprising:

(a) determining if a customer is defunct, wherein the determining if the customer is defunct comprises:

specifying a permissible defunct threshold at a manager console; and

determining a probability that a customer will become defunct; and

(b) determining a dynamically optimized promotion, wherein the dynamically optimized promotion is determined by sampling via a sampling engine;

the sampling comprising:

determining a size of a sample, the sample comprising defunct customers, wherein a customer is defunct if the probability that the customer will become defunct is greater than the permissible defunct threshold;

offering different promotions to the defunct customers; and

determining the dynamically optimized promotion based on responses to the different promotions offered to the defunct customers;

wherein the dynamically optimized promotion is propagated to the web marketing site.

38. **(New)** The method according to claim 37, wherein the sampling is run continuously.

39. **(New)** The method according to claim 38, wherein the dynamically optimized promotion comprises a discount on a product that maximizes customer retention.

40. **(New)** The method according to claim 39, wherein:

a permissible defunct threshold for customers that have previously spent more than $1000 is set lower than a permissible defunct threshold for customers that previously spent more than $50; and

the dynamically optimized promotion is propagated to the web marketing site for offering to subsequent customers each time the dynamically optimized promotion changes by a particular amount, as discovered via sampling, the particular amount comprising $0.25.